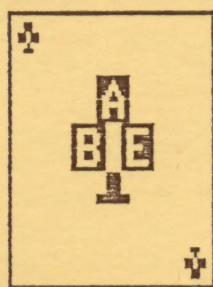# ALLENTOWN BETHLEHEM EASTON'S

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# ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

# WELCOME

Allentown Bethlehem Easton's Atari
Computer Enthusiasts (ABE's ACEs) is an
independent, informal organization of
Atari computer owners. While our club is
recognized by Atari Corporation, it is
not affiliated with Atari or any other
commercial enterprise.

What are user groups all about? The
April/May 1985 issue of Atari Explorer
had one of the best one-sentence answers.
"Users groups provide a forum to share
ideas, to get advice, and to learn how to
get the most out of your Atari computer."

This guide was written to introduce new
club members to the many functions and
services of our club. It's our hope that
this information will make it easier for
members to utilize the club.

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The club is governed by a seven member
board known as the executive committee.
Each member of the board has an area of
responsibility. The President presides
over the monthly meetings and oversees
board functions. The Vice President
arranges for the presentations at the
monthly meetings and assumes the
presidents duties if needed. The
treasurer handles all finances for the
club. The Recording Secretary keeps
minutes of all board meetings. The
Membership Secretary tracks all
membership information. The Librarian is
responsible for the club's disk, tape and
book materials. The Newsletter Editor is
responsible for the publication of the
club's newsletter.

These seven board members determine the
direction of the club. All decisions are
made by a majority vote. Executive
committee members are elected from the
general club membership each June to
serve a one year term. Any club member,
eighteen years of age or older, may run
for the executive committee. Nominations
are made at the May meeting. If you're
interested in more information about the
inner-workings of the club, ask the
librarian for a copy of the club's
constitution. Several copies are
availabe for loan from the library.

## MONTHLY MEETING

Monthly meetings are held the second
Saturday of each month. We understand
that some members cannot attend meetings
on a Saturday afternoon and that others
would prefer if the meetings were held at
some other day or time. The Saturday
afternoon meeting has proven to be the
best time for the largest number of our
members and until such time as the
majority of our members request another
date, the Saturday meetings will
continue.

Doors open at 1:30PM. It is requested
that you do not arrive at the meeting
hall before 1:30. From 1:30 until 2PM
you may use the club library, visit the
vendors who sometimes rent space from the
club, or just visit with fellow Atari
computer owners. By all means, do
mingle. It's easy for a club to appear
to be a group of "clicks" where new
members feel like outsiders. Don't let
this discourage you. Almost everyone at
our meetings first met at a club meeting.
We all share a common interest in Atari
computers and our club is not full of

"computer experts." The full range of user levels are represented from new owner to experienced programmer. The vast majority of our users fall into the large area in between, average Atari computer owners. This is also a good time to take a look at the bulletin board we set up at each meeting. This is where we post messages about new additions to our club library, area events and other club news. Members are also permitted to post notices on this board. (No commercial vendor adds please.)

At 2PM the general meeting is called to order. The board members update the membership on all club matters such as finance, membership, etc.

The next section of the general meeting is known as the I/O or Input/Output section. For those of us not versed in "computerese" this is the question and answer section. If you have any Atari-related questions, feel free to ask them. Nothing is too trivial or complex to be asked but not all questions will be answered on the spot. Here's the general rule we try to follow: If the question is of general interest and an answer can be given in a reasonable amout of time, great! If the question is of general interest but an in-depth answer, requiring quite a bit of time is required, both the person with the question and the person with the answer will be asked to get together after the general meeting. If enough interest is shown in the subject of the question, a future presentation or newsletter article may be planned. The third possibility is a very technical question of limited interest to the general membership. Again, anyone who can help will be asked

to answer the question after the meeting.
The final possibility is a question for
which no one knows the answer (GASP).  In
this case, every effort will be made to
track down the requested information in
time for next month's meeting.

This is also the time for announcements.
If you have a piece of equipment for
sale, heard of a new software store, or
whatever, please share the information.

The next section of the meeting is for
presentations or demos.  From time to
time we have outside speakers on a
variety of subjects but most of our
presenters are fellow club members.  You
don't have to be an expert to give a
short demonstration.  If you buy a
program, why not let the rest of the club
see what it's like. The Vice President
schedules all of our presentations and he
or she will be asking for volunteers
almost every month.  If your a new
member, there's no rush.  Attend a few
meetings and see what other people are
showing then, when you're ready, contact
the VP about a game or utility you'd be
willing to show.  Most of these demos
last 5-10 minutes and consist of simply
showing the main features of the program.

The formal meeting is normally over
around 3:30.  Don't rush off.  After the
meeting members have a chance to ask
questions of the executive committee
members or the members who gave demos.
It's also another chance to talk with
other members or browse at a vendors
table.

## MEETING  RULES

We have very few rules dealing with the

monthly meetings but a few, based on
common courtesy, are enforced.

1) There will be <u>NO</u> <u>BUYING</u> <u>OR</u> <u>SELLING</u>
during the general meeting.  Please visit
the vendor tables before 2PM or after the
general meeting.

2) Please don't hold private
conversations during the meeting.  It
makes it difficult for other members who
want to hear what's going on at the
meeting and is inconsiderate of the
feelings of those people who are giving
demos.

3) Don't litter in the meeting hall.
Smoking is permitted but you are asked
not to leave cigarette butts on the
floor.  The club and its members have a
responsibility to leave the meeting room
in the same condition it was in at the
start of the meeting.

4) All demos must be of original
programs, not copies or filename
versions.

5) Commercial vendors may rent space at
the monthly meetings.  The cost is $5.00
per meeting.  If the vendor has an
advertisement in the current issue of the
club newsletter, the $5.00 charge will be
waved.  Because space at the monthly
meetings is limited, the executive
committee reserves the right to limit the
number of vendor tables.

## LIBRARY

ABE's ACEs maintains an extensive
library.  All selections in the library
are available to the general membership.
The club attempts to obtain a wide

variety with something of interest for
everyone.

The library is open from 1:30 until 2PM.
It is closed once the meeting is called
to order.  The library is open again for
approximately one-half hour at the
conclusion of the formal presentations
and demos.

## THE DISK LIBRARY

Copies of library disks are available at
the monthly meetings.  The cost of a club
disk covers the HIGH QUALITY disk plus
wear and tear on the club's drives.

No copies will be made at the meetings.
Every attempt will be made to have enough
copies on hand of all disk selections.
If for some reason we should run out of a
particular disk, you may fill out a disk
order form.  Give the order form and
payment (No additional charge for
shipping.) to the librarian or assistant.
You will receive a reciept which you
should hold on to until you receive your
disk, normally within ten (10) days.

We are attempting to use a standardized
menu program throughout the library
(exceptions will be made for special
edition disks).  The club's menu will run
both BASIC and machine code programs.  Up
to thirty-six files can be shown on the
screen.  If the disk has more files an
option is displayed for a second screen.
The menu also allows you to change disks,
go to DOS or exit to BASIC.  Only locked
files are displayed thus support files
will not clutter the menu display.

A catalog of all programs in the library
is available for a nominal fee.  This

A catalog of all programs in the library is available for a nominal fee. This catalog lists all programs by disk number. Wherever nessesary, a short description of the program is included. We try to keep filenames as descriptive as possible. To help with this, and to help you in choosing programs from the library, we make use of filename extensions. Please refer to the library's filename extension key included in your club information folder. This sheet will explaine what each extension stands for.

## THE TAPE LIBRARY

ABE's ACEs maintains an extensive tape library for those members who do not have a disk drive. A tape based system does not lend itself well to some of the more sophisticated software available from our disk library. We are however constantly expanding the tape library as new material comes in.

Due to the nature of the medium it is impractical to offer software for sale on a cassette. In light of this the club provides tape software on a lending basis. You may take club cassettes home to make copies of the software for your own use and return the original cassette at the next meeting. Members may borrow no more than two cassettes at a time.

Because it is both time consuming and tiresome to have to replace lost or damaged cassettes, we urge you to take good care of the materials. Please return tapes promptly so that other club members can enjoy them.

# THE PAPER LIBRARY

The club also maintains a large
collection of printed materials.  This
collection includes some of the best user
guides available for the Atari computer.
Also on hand are periodicals, newsletters
from other Atari clubs as well as our
own, and a selection of printed product
information.

Most of the printed material is available
on a "take out" basis.  The club reserves
the right to lable some items as
"research only".  This material, being
difficult or impossible to replace, will
be available for inspection only at club
meetings.

The club's policy for lending out printed
materials is simple enough.  Pieces are
loaned out on a per item basis for the
period of time between club meetings.  In
the past, some library property either
never came back or was returned several
months late.  In light of this we have
instituted a policy of keeping a deposit
for materials out on loan.  It currently
stands at $5.00 for a book and $1.00 for
a periodical.  Please note that we are
not in the business of selling books and
magazines — the deposit(s) are refunded
upon return of the document(s).

## LIBRARY DONATIONS

If you have rewritten, modified or
improved any existing programs or have
written any programs for your own use we
encourage you to donate them to the
library.  Feel free to splash your name
across the title screen.  After all, you
wrote (or rewrote) it yourself!  Don't be

suprised if we add an "ABE's ACEs
PRESENTS..." - even a club needs
recognition.

If you have any donations to make, bring
a copy and see the librarian before or
after the meeting.  Your disk will be
copied and returned by the end of the
meeting.  If you can include any
instructions or information about the
program it would be a big help.  It can
be in the form of a typed sheet or a help
file on the disk.  The library is one of
the most time consuming jobs in the club
and anything members can do to ease the
burden is greatly appreciated.

## BEYOND THE MEETINGS

Our club is more than a group of people
who meet once a month.  In fact, a number
of people have joined the club knowing
full-well that they were unable to attend
the general meetings.  They are able to
share in the club thru one or more of the
club's additional functions beyond the
monthly meetings.

## NEWSLETTER

One of these functions is the club's
newsletter.  ABE's LOG is published six
times a year.  It keeps members informed
of all club activities, the latest Atari
news,  programming tips and much more.
As with all club functions, the
newsletter depends on the support of its
members.  Please contribute to it.  A
software review, program idea, news item,
even a high score from your favorite
Atari game is welcome in the LOG.

The newsletter editor would like your
submissions on disk in DOS 2 format.  If

you can't put your submission on a disk a
type written page will do.

Bring your submission to the next club
meeting or send it directly to the
newsletter editor whose name and address
are published in each issue.  Files for
the newsletter may also be uploaded to
the Help Key BBS.  If you have any
questions about the newsletter or
submissions, please contact the editor.

## Special Interests

Special Interest Groups or SIGs are a
growing part of our club.  When a club
gets as large as ours, it becomes
increasingly difficult to satisfy all of
the members diverse interests.  Any club
member can join a SIG.  A list of the
club's current, active SIGs can be found
in this information packet.  If you see a
topic for which you have a special
interest, contact the SIG leader whose
name is also on this list.  If you have
an interest for which the club has no
SIG, why not start one?  The executive
committee will be happy to help you.
Contact the club president for more
information on what's involved in
starting your own SIG.  Basically, these
groups meet on a day other than that of
the general club meeting.  They get
support in the form of both money and
equipment, from the club.  In return they
report to the club via its newsletter or
at the general meetings.  From time to
time each SIG is expected to make a
presentation to the general membership.

The major advantages of SIGs are the fact
that the specialize in topics that
interest those attending.  They meet on
days other than those of the main club

thus members who cannot make the general
meeting can often attend SIGs. The
smaller numbers of members attending each
SIG meeting allow for a much more
personal exchange between members. It's
often possible to get one-on-one help at
a SIG meeting.

# BBS

The club has its own electronic bulletin
board system or BBS called THE HELP KEY.
This is a computer system which you can
call over normal phone lines. If you
have a modem as part of your Atari
system, your computer can link up with
the club's system. You can then get the
latest club info, read and post messages,
download programs and much more.

Complete information on our club's BBS
and how to use it is included in your
club information folder. This
information was written by the club's
telecommunications SIG. If you've never
used a BBS or a modem this SIG would be a
good place to start.

# IN CONCLUSION...

That covers all of the major areas of the
club. If after reading this pamphlet you
have any questions about any aspect of
the club, feel free to contact any member
of the executive committee or bring it up
at the next general meeting.

As stated earlier, this is your club.
It's made up of a diverse group of
individuals with at least one common
interest, Atari computers. It's up to
all of us to make the club work. Get
invloved. We're always ready to listen
to new ideas and suggestions. Contribute

what you can...demos, newsletter
material, SIGs, whatever.  Most of us
have found that the more we give, the
more we receive.  Above all, have fun.
This club is dedicated to helping you get
the most enjoyment out of your Atari
computer investment.

                    Sincerely,
               The Executive Committee
                    July 1985

    Thanks to Michael Stoliker for writing
         the section about our library.